



City of Austin

**Leslie Pool, Council Member
District 7**

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Addressing Affordability and Displacement

Item E-18

Developing Policy Tools to Fight Gentrification & Displacement

This would fund a resolution Council passed to partner with the University of Texas on a gentrification study.

- In August 2017, Council directed the City Manager to negotiate an interlocal agreement with the University of Texas (UT) to study patterns of gentrification and displacement in Austin, map the city according to each area's vulnerability, and recommend policy solutions.¹ This item would provide \$69,000 to fund that inter-local agreement.

This study would provide a policy foundation for ongoing city efforts to address affordability and displacement.

- A 2015 analysis by *Governing* found that Austin is gentrifying at a higher rate than most other major cities: Austin ranked eighth out of the 50 largest cities in the U.S. on the share of its Census tracts that are gentrifying.²
- This item would fund a study, modeled on similar work in Portland,³ that would help move efforts to stabilize Austin's gentrifying communities forward by providing a range of recommendations and by mapping the entire city according to each area's vulnerability to displacement. This mapping tool would serve as an interdepartmental asset for city staff to use when analyzing the impact city policies would have on communities vulnerable to displacement.

Item C-29

Providing Affordable Creative Space for Local Artists

This item would make the improvements needed to offer four cultural centers as affordable creative space.

- This item would invest \$240,000 in the expanded hours, equipment, and technical expertise needed to utilize four city-owned cultural centers as affordable creative space for arts events, performances, productions, and workshops.
- It would implement these improvements at the Asian-American Resource Center, Emma S. Barrientos Mexican-American Cultural Center, Dougherty Arts Center, and George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center.
- Making the improvements needed to activate this affordable creative space is estimated to help support ten performing arts organizations.⁴

Both the creative community and city reports recommend using cultural centers as affordable creative space.

- A 2016 focus group with Austin's creative community found that providing more access to cultural centers was a high priority.⁵
- This item would implement a recommendation from Austin's Music and Creative Ecosystem Stabilization Report that the city leverage its existing facilities to help provide affordable creative space for local artists.⁶
- It would also support a strategic initiative from the Parks and Recreation Department's Strategic Plan that prioritizes leveraging the creative sector in Austin to supplement cultural programming.⁷

**Table 1. Affordable Creative Space
Budget Item**

Investment	Budget
Expanded Hours & Maintenance Costs	\$140,000
Lighting/Sound Equipment & Services	\$100,000
Total	\$240,000

Source: Parks & Recreation Dept. Staff

¹ Austin Council Resolution 20170817-055

² Mike Maciag, "Gentrification in America Report," *Governing* (February 2015).

³ Lisa Bates, "Gentrification & Displacement Study," City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (18 May 2013).

⁴ Austin Creative Alliance Estimate.

⁵ Christine Harris & John Carnwath, "Building Austin's Creative Capacity: Creative Sector Needs Assessment," WolfBrown (28 March 2016).

⁶ Music & Creative Ecosystem Stabilization Recommendations: Recommendation 2.3.10, Austin Economic Development Dept. (June 2016).

⁷ PARC Strategic Plan (2017-2021): Strategic Initiative 5.4, Austin Parks and Recreation Dept. (2 December 2016).